

How massive GOP victory could hurt 2nd Amendment

Jeff Knox wishes for 'Goldilocks' result: Not too much, not too little

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While there is still some jockeying in the polls over a few seats in the coming congressional elections, the broad outcome keeps coming back to expectations of a closely divided Congress with Democrats maintaining a slim majority in the Senate and Republicans taking a slight majority in the House.

While such a result will be a disappointment to Republican activists seeking control of both houses, a limited victory and a gridlocked Congress is probably much better strategically for conservatives in the long run than tenuous control of the House and Senate. I contend that the likelihood of extensive conservative gains in 2012 will actually be diminished if Republicans gain control of both houses this year.

Before Erik Erickson at RedState.com blows a gasket, let me explain my reasoning. **If Republicans take control of both houses this year, they will be expected to "do something," but the political reality is that, while Barack Obama wields the veto pen and RINOs remain in office, little can be accomplished beyond blocking more damage to the Constitution.** That will be reported as "Gridlock," and Republicans will be blamed for it whether they control both houses or not.

If Republicans do win a slim majority in both houses, they will **not have enough votes to get any more done, just hold a little more control of the process**, such as naming committee chairs and controlling floor agendas. Most importantly, **control of both houses would also mean blame and recriminations from their own base for failing to accomplish anything of serious value.** When you throw in a handful of RINOs to effectively negate the slim majority on anything important, the Republicans get double the blame.

But as long as establishment Democrats hold a slim majority in at least one house, Republicans can blame them for their inability to get anything done. It is also historically demonstrable that Republicans have much more spine when they are the minority, trying to push the Democrats into taking votes on difficult and controversial issues, than they do when they are the majority and trying hard to avoid taking such votes themselves.

This underdog dynamic has proven to be a very good thing for gun rights, as ours is one of the favored subjects of such difficult votes, and when they are taken, we often win. Aside from such possibilities, the legislative result of minority status would be virtually the same as if Republicans had total control, but the newly elected conservatives wouldn't be taking as much of the blame.

Let no one suggest that **I am advocating easing up on the push to win in every race on the ballot this year** – at least every race with a definitive choice for gun voters, something the two major parties have often failed to provide us. The poll predictions are based on current levels of activity and enthusiasm, and unless everyone keeps working hard for good candidates, gun voters will be the losers.

There is **no doubt that this year's elections are critically important** – probably the single most important in decades, but the stakes are bigger than a single election. **To really change the direction of the country, conservatives must not only win this year's election to stop the Obama/Pelosi/Reid steamroller from its continued destruction of the Constitution** – which must invariably include trampling the Second Amendment – **but also win the 2012 elections so as to be able to begin reversing the damage that has already been done and start moving back toward the republic the Constitution established.**

Recent history supports my contentions. After the mid-term elections of **1994**, **no one expected Bill Clinton to have a snowball's chance of reelection in 1996. But when 1996 rolled around, Clinton won handily, and Democrats also cut into the Republican majority** by picking up several House seats. The reasons for Clinton's victory can be boiled down to three general factors and one terrible event. The general factors were:

- 1) The choice of Bob Dole as the Republican presidential candidate,
- 2) The dramatic shift of Bill Clinton from the far left to the center-right,
- 3) **The failure of the Republican majority to live up to expectations of the people who elected them.** The terrible event was, of course, the bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which Clinton and the media effectively distorted to paint all conservatives, especially gun owners, as being complicit in that horrible act. Outrageous as the charge was, it succeeded in taking much of the steam out of the conservative movement.

Gun voters and the conservative movement can't control all of the factors leading to victory in 2012, but we can control some of them. The two **most important are to make sure that there is a solid, pro-rights conservative candidate for president who can excite the base and still draw enough of the middle to win**, and for the congressional class of 2010 to diligently and publicly work toward fulfilling their campaign promises. While newly elected conservatives in Congress are unlikely to accomplish much between now and 2012, they have two years to refine legislation and strategy, demonstrate their resolve and to flush out the RINOs in their midst.

Unless public opinion and all the pollsters are wrong, gun voters should have a lot to celebrate next month. But, regardless of whether Republicans take back the majority in Congress, **don't let your guard down. We need to keep the momentum going, pushing our advantage to a resounding, definitive victory to uphold the Constitution and protect individual rights – this year and again in the elections of 2012.**